



SAFER USE STRATEGIES: CANNABIS

Here are some tips to help you stay safer & healthier no matter how you choose to change your cannabis use. Using safer does not mean that you remove all risks, but it can help reduce substance-related harm. You are worth it!

<i>Ways to buffer the effects</i>	Source wisely	WHY? Cannabis products can contain contaminants, pesticides & fillers. HOW? When you can, buy from a licensed cannabis retailer. If you can't, buy from known & more trusted suppliers.
	Understand the laws	WHY? Legality & enforcement priority differs from place to place. HOW? Know laws & regulations where you are living, like rental agreements. Use in ways that will reduce your risk of arrest & prosecution.
	Know your strain	WHY? Educate yourself about the strain you are using & its possible effects. HOW? Indica-dominant strains can be more relaxing but sedating & sativa-dominant strains can be more energizing but anxiety-provoking.
	Consider CBD	WHY? CBD can counter some of the less desirable side effects of cannabis use, like anxiety or unwanted feelings of paranoia. HOW? Using CBD prior to THC use &/or using higher CBD/THC ratios.
<i>Ways to change how you use</i>	Use care with high concentration THC products	WHY? High THC (> 85%) products like dabs pack an intense psychedelic experience. They can trigger psychosis (e.g., unwanted hallucinations, paranoia) & worsening of pre-existing psychological disorders (e.g., depression, anxiety). HOW? Avoid high THC products, esp if you have a family history of psychosis & if you are younger, to avoid triggering it.
	Dose low & go slow	WHY? It's harder to track exactly what dose you are getting when you vape or smoke, esp if you are sharing with others or using other substances. Also, edibles take longer to kick in—even by 1-2 hrs. HOW? After you take a dose, wait & see how you feel before doing more.
	Avoid mixing drugs	WHY? Mixing can increase sedation, anxiety, memory gaps, overall impairment HOW? When you use cannabis, try to avoid other drugs or use with caution
	Use in a safer mental & physical place	WHY? In unsafe spaces, you can experience psychological & physical harm, legal issues, or interpersonal problems. It also impacts judgment & reaction time. HOW? Avoid using with people you don't trust. Use where you feel more in control of your surroundings. Set a good mood with affirmations, music, & positive mindset. Never drive or operate heavy machinery when using.
	Avoid smoking	WHY? Smoking (esp when adding to tobacco) & even vaping can irritate the lungs & can cause or worsen chronic lung disease like COPD or asthma. HOW? Edibles reduce impact on lungs. Vaping is generally safer than smoking. Consult your physician about personal risks with pre-existing conditions.
<i>Ways to change how much you use</i>	Less is more	WHY? Most things people like about cannabis occur at lower intoxication levels HOW? Pace yourself to ride out your high while avoiding overconsumption or "greening out."
	Choose not to use	WHY? Daily use can lead to physical dependence & withdrawal. Using in risky situations—at work, driving, before medical procedures—can increase risk for physical harm. For some, not using at all is safest. HOW? Introducing non-use days can help avoid physical dependence & not using in certain situations, like prior to medical procedures, when driving or working, can reduce potential harm. Find healthy outlets: Get into your interests & hobbies. Identify peer pressure & figure out what's best for you.